

## **Animal Care Stakeholder Update**

May 24, 2005

Dear Stakeholder:

Since 1966, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal Care (AC), program has administered and enforced the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) to ensure that animals covered by the Act receive proper care and treatment. As part of that responsibility, AC licenses commercial animal dealers and breeders and inspects their facilities to make sure they adhere to AWA regulations. This latest Stakeholder Update is the start of a targeted effort to reach out to commercial animal dealers and breeders who are not currently licensed with AC and bring them into compliance.

Beginning June 1, 2005, AC is initiating a 90-day drive to license all commercial breeders and dealers. The goal of this drive is education. AC wants to ensure that those facilities that need to be regulated are aware of and understand our licensing requirements. We're also working closely with industry to connect with unlicensed breeders and dealers that in the past may have been afraid to step forward and become licensed for fear they would be penalized by AC. Thus this 90-day drive will benefit commercial breeders and dealers, the animals in their care and help AC expedite the process of identifying new licensees.

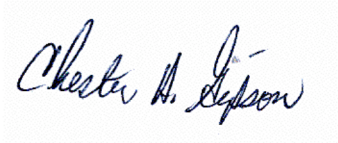
When AC learns of an unlicensed breeding kennel conducting sales covered by the AWA, our initial step is to notify the kennel owner of the need to become licensed and provide application materials. Typically, if a kennel owner applies for a license in a timely manner or immediately ceases all covered sales, we have not pursued enforcement action for previous sales. However, if a kennel continues to make unlicensed sales after AC has notified them of the licensing requirements, the Agency will pursue enforcement action. It is important to note that a facility will not be held culpable for unlicensed sales if they have applied for a license but program workloads cause a delay in their pre-licensing inspection. AC has licensed more than 2,000 new kennels in the last two years, and we realize that it may take several weeks before our inspectors can schedule initial pre-licensing inspections.

We encourage anyone who needs to become licensed or has questions about whether their activities fall within the regulatory scope of the AWA to contact AC's Eastern or Western Regional Offices. While we cannot overlook continued operation without a license, we will take into account breeders and dealers' efforts to remedy the situation when determining what actions to pursue. This is the first time AC has initiated a license drive, and we are committed to working with all commercial breeders and dealers that contact us.

For more information, contact AC's Eastern Regional Office at 919-855-7100 or via e-mail at [aceast@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:aceast@aphis.usda.gov). The Western Regional Office can be reached at 970-494-

7478 or by e-mail at [acwest@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:acwest@aphis.usda.gov) . The Western Region includes all States and territories west of the Mississippi River, except Minnesota. Click here for a breakdown of States that fall under the Eastern and Western regions:  
<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ac/acorg.html>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Chester H. Gipson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C" and a distinct "H".

Chester Gipson, DVM  
AC Deputy Administrator